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39. [REDACTED]

#### THE DEATHS OF NICHOLAS BLAKE AND GRIFFITH DAVIS

40. Nicholas Blake, a 26-year-old freelance journalist from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Griffith Davis, a 38-year-old amateur photographer from Scranton, Pennsylvania who had resided in Guatemala for three years, were last seen on March 29, 1985. At that time, they were walking in a remote mountain area of El Quiche province, which is located 150 miles northwest of Guatemala City.

41. Blake and Davis traveled to the highlands to investigate a possible story regarding the Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP), the Guerrilla Army of the Poor. The EGP was one of four insurgent groups in Guatemala.

42. The Blake family investigation concluded that the two were detained by a Civilian Action Patrol (PAC) in Los Llanos, a district in Huehuetenango. The PACs are paramilitary groups comprised of civilians but are organized by the Army, which supervises their counterinsurgency operations. Three PAC members killed Blake and Davis for their possessions and because they were suspected of being guerrilla sympathizers.

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43. Seven years later, a military commissioner from the area came forward after being assured by Blake's family that no charges would be filed in return for the remains of Blake and Davis. He said that the bodies of the two men were moved from the site where they had been killed and were burned in order to conceal evidence of the crime. The remains of Davis and Blake were located and identified in 1992.

44. In 1993, Blake's family filed a petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights charging the Guatemalan Government with Blake's murder and a subsequent cover-up. The family alleged that the Guatemalan Government was legally responsible for the Blake and Davis deaths because the PAC was under its command. The Blake family continues to seek financial compensation from the Guatemalan Government.

#### CIA Reporting

45. DO reporting regarding the Blake/Davis case ranges from May 1985 until December 1994 and consists of [REDACTED] Station Reports<sup>1</sup> and [REDACTED] Intelligence Reports. Several Headquarters cables also appear in Agency files. [REDACTED] were unable to provide substantive information on the initial disappearance and deaths of Blake and Davis.

46. May 9, 1985 Headquarters Cable. Headquarters requested that the Station check with [REDACTED] for any new developments or information related to the case.

47. May 10, 1985 Station Report. The Station reported that, on April 30, 1985, a friend of Blake's who was the owner of a hotel in Antigua reported that he received a card from Blake through the Guatemalan postal system. The card indicated that Blake was alive and well. On May 2, 1985, a private investigator hired by the families of Blake and Davis reported that the friend burned the card for unspecified reasons.

[REDACTED]

48. According to the Station Report, Blake and Davis were last seen on March 29 or March 30, 1985 in the village of Llano, El Quiche, near the Department of Huehuetenango in the western highlands of Guatemala. Despite warnings that there were EGP units in the area, Blake and Davis decided to continue on their own and on foot using a route that was not normally patrolled by the Army.

49. On April 27, the Commander of Military Zone 20 (El Quiche) met with relatives of Blake and Davis and pointed out that the EGP units in his area consisted mostly of Indians who did not speak Spanish and who were indoctrinated to believe that all foreigners were witting collaborators of the Guatemalan Government. Furthermore, the Commander noted that these EGP units would kill for a camera or even a pair of pants.

50. On May 10, 1985, [REDACTED] visited the commander of Military Zone 20. [REDACTED] learned that, despite repeated efforts on the part of Army units to locate Blake and Davis, no additional information had been acquired concerning their whereabouts. Neither [REDACTED] the Guatemalan Army, nor the Station and Embassy were able to establish new leads that would shed light on the whereabouts of Blake and Davis.

51. November 22, 1985 Headquarters Cable. Headquarters informed the Station that the U.S. Vice President had made a special request for an update of information on the disappearance of Blake. It was requested that the Station query [REDACTED] sources.

52. November 25, 1985 Station Report. The Station reported that [REDACTED] were queried several times on the status of the Blake case. None provided any information on Blake's fate.

53. According to the Station Report, members of the Blake family accused the Guatemalan Army of either having killed Blake or covering up his death. The Station uncovered no evidence of military involvement in Blake's disappearance.

54. The purpose of Blake's foray into El Quiche was to contact the EGP. Presumably, he expected similar treatment from them as he had received from the Salvadoran guerrillas. However, the guerrillas of the EGP were not the same sort of sophisticated, publicity-seeking types that he probably found among the Salvadoran insurgents. The Station reported that Blake and Davis chose their route into El Quiche deliberately to avoid the Army and they hiked into the middle of an isolated EGP-controlled area for the specific purpose of contacting the EGP. It was likely that they were killed by the EGP. The Station commented that, for some unknown reason, Blake's brothers seemed unwilling to consider that the guerrillas were responsible for his death.

55. August 6, 1986 Station Report. The Station referred to an August 3, 1986 New York Times article entitled, "Guatemala Rebels Accused of Slaying American," that noted that members of the Blake family concluded that he and a friend were killed by guerrillas and not the Army as they initially and repeatedly had claimed. The article depicted the EGP as the group responsible for the murders.

[REDACTED]

56. [REDACTED]

57. [REDACTED]

58. December [REDACTED] 1992 Intelligence Report. The Station indicated that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] stated that the Guatemalan military was under increased pressure from the U.S. Embassy on behalf of the Blake family. According to [REDACTED] the Blake family was preparing to present a case against Guatemala in the Inter-American Court in an attempt to collect financial compensation for the lengthy search for Blake's remains and for the grief suffered by family members.

59. [REDACTED] stated that the U.S. should not expect Guatemalan authorities to collaborate in the investigations of past incidents if they must fear that their efforts will be used against them in a suit against the Guatemalan Government. Guatemalan authorities were in the process of retrieving four letters received from the Blake family and the Embassy expressing gratitude to Guatemalan Government officials for their cooperation in the Blake investigation. Guatemalan Government officials planned to use these letters in their defense of the Blake case.

60. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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62.

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63. July 19, 1995 Station Report. Based on [REDACTED] request from Headquarters, [REDACTED] conducted a search [REDACTED] for draft cables related to human rights cases that the Station may not have forwarded to Headquarters. [REDACTED] contained no cables that were not forwarded to Headquarters.

#### Other Reporting

64. CIA received 18 reports relating to Blake and Davis from the Guatemala Embassy, the Department of State, FBIS, and the Defense Attaché Office (DAO).

- ♦ April 19, 1985 State Telegram. State reported that on April 8, a friend of Davis reported to the Embassy that Blake and Davis had not returned from a hiking trip in the Huehuetenango and El Quiche area of Guatemala. They were expected to return on April 3 or 4, according to the friend. Government military units mounted a search of the area.
- ♦ April 21, 1985 FBIS Report. FBIS summarized a local newspaper story that Blake and Davis disappeared on April 3 while preparing to climb the Cuchumatanes Mountains, which served as a hideout for guerrilla groups fighting the Army. The two planned a meeting with the "Poor People's Guerrilla Army" (EGP).
- ♦ April 25, 1985 FBIS Report. FBIS summarized media comments on the disappearance of Blake and Davis. The Guatemalan President commented that the missing Americans could have been taken hostage by the guerrillas.

- ♦ May 24, 1985 FBIS Report. FBIS summarized an article that reflected that the whereabouts of Blake and Davis, who disappeared in a conflict zone, were still unknown.
- ♦ June 3, 1985 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy reported that Carl West, a security consultant hired by Davis's family, visited the Embassy on May 29 to review recent developments in the case. West said that on May 25, he received a phone call from a female caller who stated that Blake was well. Another source of West's said that he had sources in Managua who assured him that Blake was with the EGP and would be released circa July 1.
- ♦ February 21, 1986 State Telegram. State reported that Mark Clark, who was with Blake and Davis prior to their trip to the highlands, did not believe that the EGP or the Guatemalan Army would kill two Americans because both groups had enough internal organization and discipline to ensure that their members would not murder foreigners. Clark believed that the local militia killed Blake and Davis and hid the bodies.
- ♦ February 21, 1989 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy reported on the issues likely to arise during President Cerezo's visit to the U.S. Cerezo was reminded that Senator Edward Kennedy and President Bush had expressed an interest in the investigation of the Blake/Davis case.



- ♦ April 4, 1990 State Telegram. State provided a history of the case: When it was learned on April 8, 1985 that Blake and Davis were missing, the Embassy requested Guatemalan Government assistance. Army patrols were alerted and the Guatemalan Army followed up with a week-long, 450-man search of the area. Embassy officers traveled to the area and air-dropped 4,500 leaflets into the area. In December 1985, Embassy officers returned to the area and interviewed former guerrillas who defected to the Government. In September 1987, an informant alleged that Blake and Davis were killed by members of the local civil patrol. The informant provided the names of seven men who participated in burying the bodies. In March 1990, the Guatemalan Minister of Defense agreed with the Embassy that all seven men should be interviewed. Embassy officers were present when three of the men were interviewed and denied knowledge of the fate of Blake and Davis. The military zone commander planned to interview the other four witnesses by mid April 1990.
- ♦ April 29, 1990 Embassy Telegram. Embassy officers traveled to Huehuetenango to be present during the questioning of a civil patrol member who was allegedly involved in the disappearance of Blake and Davis. He initially denied any knowledge of the case but later admitted that he had heard of the disappearance and discussed the matter with other civil patrol commanders.
- ♦ May 9, 1990 Embassy Telegram. An Embassy officer accompanied Blake family members to Huehuetenango, where they met the zone commander. The Embassy officer spoke to a civil patrol member who allegedly was involved in the

murders but denied any knowledge of the disappearance of Blake and Davis.

- ♦ June 17, 1992 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy reported that Blake family members, accompanied by forensic anthropologists and others, recovered teeth and bones from a site. The Embassy commented that there was no doubt that Blake and Davis were murdered by the civil patrol, and not the guerrillas as was originally suspected. A brother of Blake's believed that they were killed on orders from the military zone commander, although there was no evidence to support his belief. The Blake brothers stated that the family would keep its promise not to seek indictment of the guilty parties.
- ♦ June 23, 1992 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy reported that the remains of Blake were positively identified by a Smithsonian medical anthropologist.
- ♦ August 4, 1992 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy reported that the remains of Davis and Blake were located in March and June, respectively. Blake's brother wrote a letter to the Ambassador and included new allegations that Guatemalan military officers may have ordered the execution of Blake and Davis. The Embassy requested that the Chief of the Guatemalan Army investigate the allegations.
- ♦ August 14, 1992 DAO Report. The DAO reported that Blake's brother alleged that Army Lt. Col. Terraza Pinot was in the same highland village in Huehuetenango as Blake and Davis on the day that the two were murdered by a civil patrol from that area. The Blake brother alleged

that the leadership of the military zone of Huehuetenango, including Lt. Col. Terraza Pinot, may have ordered the civil patrollers to carry out the killings and then participated in the cover-up.

- ♦ October 27, 1993 State Telegram. State summarized a complaint filed by Blake's brothers before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The complaint sought several remedies, including a declaration that the Guatemalan Government violated the American Convention on Human Rights when members of a civil patrol killed Blake and Davis, and that it had failed to investigate the killings and prosecute those responsible. The Blake family requested that the Embassy communicate to the Guatemalan Government the family's willingness to discuss settlement directly with the Guatemalan Government.
- ♦ April 5, 1993 DAO Report. The DAO reported that, during a social function, a DAO officer explained to the Guatemalan Army Chief of Staff that no civil defense patrol members had been arrested for the murders of Blake and Davis, and the Army was being accused of covering up the involvement of the civil defense patrol members in the case. The Chief of Staff agreed that the Army should try to make some progress in this investigation.
- ♦ April 7, 1995 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy reported on a meeting that Ambassador Marilyn McAfee had with the Minister of Defense, who offered little hope of any new action or breakthrough on the Blake/Davis case. The Blake family requested an indemnification of \$800,000 from the Guatemalan Government. The family's

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sworn statements to the civil defense patrol members that no criminal charges would be pursued in return for locating the remains of Blake and Davis made it very difficult to pursue judicial proceedings against the patrol members.

- ♦ May 11, 1995 Embassy Telegram. The Embassy summarized the results of a meeting that the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) had with the Chief of the Presidential Military Staff on human rights cases. The DCM said that those involved in the murder of Blake and Davis by the El Llano civil patrol of Huehuetenango should be punished.

#### Personnel Recollections

65. CIA personnel indicated they had no additional knowledge relating to the deaths of Blake and Davis.

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